

THE SWARM



President's message

As promised, here is volume I of our new newsletter

In this newsletter:

- Cashing Out Unused Sick/Personal Leave
- What does a WEA-NEA Representative Assembly Delegate Do?
- New Approved 2026-27 Calendar
- VEBA-Cash Out Vote Results

December Social

December 17th @ 4:00pm

Executive Board

January 7th @ 4:30pm

Representative Council

January 14th @ 4:30pm

Executive Board

February 4th @ 4:30pm

Winter Break

December 22nd - January 2nd

Cashing Out Unused Sick/Personal Leave

If you are eligible to cash out unused sick leave (up to 12 days from 2025) and/or unused Personal leave, know that the cash value of those cash outs must go into a VEBA account this year. That was the decision made by a vote of members last month. So, if you are eligible to cash out unused sick leave from the 2025 calendar-year, you will be able to do so by completing a form that will be available in January 2026. If you decide to cash out any unused Personal Leave, like the 5th and 6th day you might have right now but cannot be carried over into next school year, you will be able to do that in June of 2026.

If you've been working in public K-12 for more than a decade and have used very few of your sick leave days, you may be close to 180 or more sick leave days accrued. Once you reach that 180-day number, you should make sure you either use, donate, and/or cash out any sick days above 180 annually. If you do not complete a cash-out form every January, to cash out up to 12 unused sick days above the 180 accrued, you will be leaving money behind!

If you've been working in public K-12 for more than a decade and know that you have used very few sick days, you should take a little time this Winter Break to figure out where your sick leave balance stands. To do so, get into your Skyward account and review Time Off Balances. Make sure you are on the 2025-2026 school year display. At the bottom of the chart there should be a row for sick leave. Look at the Current Year Ending Balance. If you have a balance above 1,350 hours, you should cash-out as many 7.5-hour days (up to a max of 12) as you can to bring your balance back to 1,350 hours (180 days). You are only allowed to cash out unused sick leave (up to 12 days) from the previous calendar year (2025) in January 2026. When you retire or separate from NTPS, you will be able to cash-out up to 180 days of unused sick leave in July or earlier if you retire before the end of a school year.

What Does a WEA-NEA Representative Assembly (RA) Delegate Do?

First, the Representative Assemblies are WEA's and NEA's annual conventions. WEA is in April and NEA's is the first week of July each year. In certain years, the Assembly is where the delegates vote on the WEA and NEA President, Vice President and other officers of the Board of Directors.

Every Year, however, at the Assemblies elected delegates move, debate, and vote on ideas for specific actions (New Business Items-NBIs), Resolutions (belief statements), legislative priorities, and other kinds of business. Many of the decisions made at these Assemblies have direct influence on us as employees in public K-12 schools in Washington State. Some decisions, like dues increases or Special Assessments, impact us financially. These assemblies can be exhilarating and exhausting, uplifting and frustrating. But they are an opportunity for union members to have a say in the direction and operation of WEA and NEA.

This year, both the WEA's and NEA's RAs, elections of new presidents and vice presidents will take place. WEA's RA will be in Spokane, WA from April 9-11, 2026 (Yes, during our Spring Break this year! To encourage participation, the NTEA Rep Council approved money to pay for a substitute, if you need one, for the Monday after the holiday week, April 13, 2026. Of course you would need to have subplans left behind!) NEA's RA will be in Denver, CO from July 3-7, 2026. In both cases, NTEA will cover travel, meals and lodging for elected delegates. To be eligible to attend the NEA RA, you have to have attended at least one WEA RA in the past.

Please consider completing a nomination form (linked below) for yourself and get on the ballot to be a delegate for one or the other (or both) Representative Assemblies this year. Nominations close at the January NTEA Rep Council meeting on January 14, 2026 and the ballot for WEA RA and NEA RA delegates and successor delegates should be going out to members the day after.

Click links below to access the Delegate Nominee Forms

[NEA-RA Delegate Nominee Form](#)

[WEA-RA Delegate Nominee Form](#)



Great Public Schools for Every Student





North Thurston Public Schools Student Calendar - 2026-27

AUGUST 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

FEBRUARY 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

- 5** Professional Dev. (No School)
- 15** Presidents' Day (No School)

ACT Wednesdays – 50 Min Early Release

18

SEPTEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

- 1** Professional Dev. (No School)
- 2** Teacher 1st Day (No School)
- 3** **1st Day of School**
- 7** Labor Day (NoSchool)

19

MARCH 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

- 29-31** Conference (tentative) (K-12, ½ Day)

ACT Wednesdays – 50 Min Early Release

23

OCTOBER 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- 26-30** Conference (tentative) (K-12½Day)

ACT Wednesdays – 50 Min Early Release

22

APRIL 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

- 1-2** Conference (tentative) (K-12, ½ Day)
- 2** End of 3rd Quarter
- 5-9** Spring Break (NoSchool)

ACT Wednesdays – 50 Min Early Release

17

NOVEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

- 2** Professional Dev. (No School)
- 6** End of 1st Quarter
- 11** Veterans Day (No School)
- 25-27** Thanksgiving Break (NoSchool)

ACT Wednesdays – 50 Min Early Release

16

MAY 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

- 28** Snow Make Up Day (if needed)
- 31** Memorial Day (No School)

19

DECEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- 21-31** Winter Break (No School)

ACT Wednesdays – 50 Min Early Release

14

JUNE 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

- 17** **Last Day of School** (½ Day)
- 21, 22** Snow Make Up Days (if needed)
- 18** Juneteenth (Observed)

13

JANUARY 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- 1** Winter Break (NoSchool)
- 18** M.L. King Day (NoSchool)
- 29** End of Semester ½ Day

ACT Wednesdays – 50 Min Early Release

19

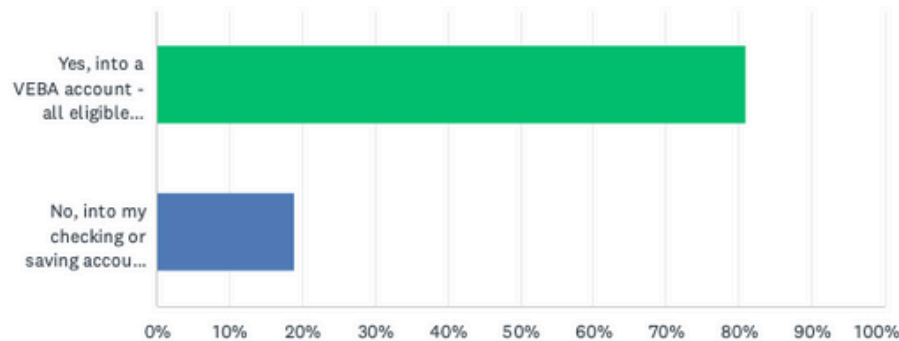
JULY 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- 4** Independence Day (Observed July 5th)

Q1 Separating from service (resigning) and are retirement-eligible or retiring on or before the end of this contract year: Do you want your accrued sick leave cash-out money (up to 180 days=1350 hours; cashed out at 4:1) placed into a VEBA account?

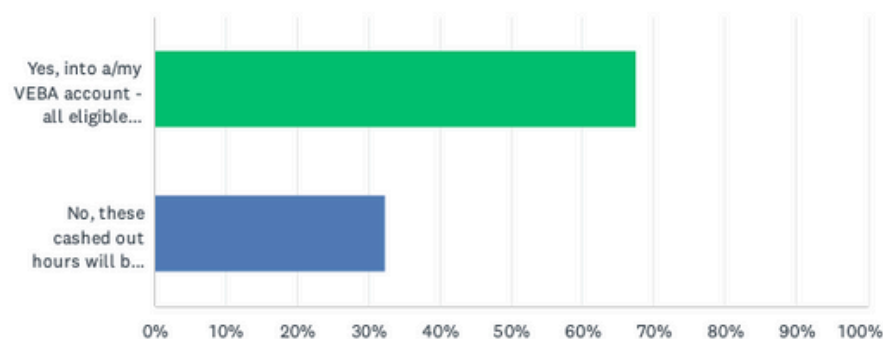
Answered: 42 Skipped: 48



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, into a VEBA account - all eligible sick leave hours, up to a maximum of 180 days, will be cashed out at a rate of one day's compensation for every four days of accrued sick leave (25%) and contributed tax free to the VEBA plan (see RCW 28A.400.210)	80.95%	34
No, into my checking or saving account - cash outs will be paid as taxable income.	19.05%	8
TOTAL		42

Q2 Not resigning or retiring, but returning for the 2026-2027 school year: If you are eligible to cash out used sick leave (from calendar year 2025), do you want your unused, annual sick leave, cashed out in January 2026 to fund your/a VEBA account, at a 4:1 rate?

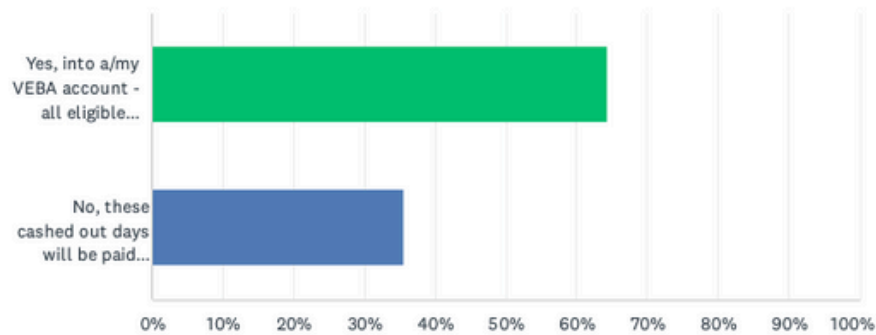
Answered: 80 Skipped: 10



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, into a/my VEBA account - all eligible sick leave hours, up to a maximum of 12 days. I understand that this will be cashed out at a rate of one day's compensation for every four days of accrued sick leave (25%) and contributed tax free to the VEBA plan (see RCW 28A.400.210)	67.50%	54
No, these cashed out hours will be paid as taxable income.	32.50%	26
TOTAL		80

Q3 If you plan on cashing out any unused Personal Leave in June 2026:Do you want the funds to go into a/your VEBA account?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 17



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, into a/my VEBA account - all eligible personal leave, up to a maximum of 6 days. I understand that this will be cashed out (tax free) at a rate of one day's compensation for every four days of accrued, unused Personal Leave.	64.38%	47
No, these cashed out days will be paid as taxable income and placed into a paycheck.	35.62%	26
TOTAL		73